

bonding the top cover member having the laminated hot melt adhesive in the pattern to the base member having the laminated film of hot melt adhesive; and

discharging air between the top cover member having the laminated hot melt adhesive in the pattern and the base member having the laminated film of hot melt adhesive only through the hot melt adhesive in the pattern, the polyurethane foam, and the top cover member.

REMARKS

Claims 18-21 are pending. The Office Action rejects claims 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103. By this Amendment, claim 18 is amended. No new matter is added. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the alleged admitted prior art, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,190,482 to Colasanto ("Colasanto"), U.S. Patent No. 5,750,444 to Jarrell et al. ("Jarrell"), U.S. Patent No. 4,940,112 to O'Neill ("O'Neill"), U.S. Patent No. 3,850,725 to Spielau et al. ("Spielau") and U.S. Patent No. 5,539,072 to Wu ("Wu"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 18 is drawn to a method for manufacturing a formed headliner for a vehicle, including: laminating a hot melt adhesive in a pattern on a back of a top cover member comprising a top cover and a polyurethane foam, the top cover member being air-permeable; laminating a film of hot melt adhesive on a front of a base member, the base member being non-air-permeable; bonding the top cover member to the base member; and discharging air between the top cover member and the base member only through the hot melt adhesive in the pattern, the polyurethane foam, and the top cover member. The cited references do not teach or suggest this method.

The admitted prior art allegedly teaches the manufacture of a formed lining for a vehicle including a top cover member bonded to a base member by use of a hot melt adhesive film, thereby trapping air between the two layers.

Colasanto describes laminating an air-permeable fabric (5) to an air-permeable substrate (4) using a discontinuous pattern of adhesive. Colasanto discloses that the fabric remains breathable. Thus, the Colasanto bonding method utilizes two materials, both having air-permeability. Accordingly, air can be discharged through either layer.

Similarly, Jarrell describes laminating two materials such as fabric and foam using a patterned adhesive wherein the bonded laminate remains breathable. Spielau describes bonding various materials using a patterned adhesive to ensure that the adhesive does not interfere with the breathing qualities of the material.

Wu describes bonding a fabric to a substrate using an adhesive in a discontinuous pattern in order to retain water-vapor permeable properties.

O'Neill describes a polyimide foam layer (3) bonded to a polyimide film facing layer (1) using an adhesive layer in a pattern. However, in O'Neill, a silicone sheet rubber layer (4) is further bonded to the polyimide foam layer (3). As a result, air cannot be discharged through the polyimide foam layers (3), adhesive layers (2B) and silicone sheet rubber layer (4). The air between the layers can be discharged only in the transverse direction.

In contrast to all of the above cited references, the method of amended claim 18 uses a top cover member and a base member wherein only one material (the top cover member including polyurethane foam and having the laminated hot melt adhesive in the pattern) has air-permeability. As stated in claim 18, the method utilizes a top cover member being air-permeable and a base member being non-air-permeable.

When the two layers are bonded, air is discharged only in one direction, i.e., through the top cover member. The claimed method excludes air discharge in every direction except

for a direction through the hot melt adhesive in the pattern, the polyurethane foam and the top cover, that is, through the top cover member.

The claimed method produces a formed headliner for a vehicle with improved durability and resilience. The headliner withstands the deterioration that could result from air in the inside of the vehicle. Furthermore, since the air between the top cover member and the base member can be discharged only through the top member, the end product does not contain air bubbles.

The alleged admitted prior art and the references cited in the Office Action, even if combined, fail to teach or suggest the method of claim 18. The combined art does not teach or suggest a process of bonding together two members, one being air-permeable and one being non-air-permeable, wherein air between the two members is discharged in only one direction, that direction being through the air-permeable member.

The alleged admitted prior art and the cited references, alone or in combination, would not have rendered the method of claim 18 obvious under §103, to one of ordinary skill in the art. Claims 19-21 depend from claim 18 and thus would also not have been obvious. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 18-21 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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